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# Gopalganj reeling from four deaths

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

An uneasy calm took hold of Gopalganj yesterday, a day after violent clashes between Awami League supporters and law enforcers over an NCP rally left at least four people dead and around 50 injured.

Since a curfew was imposed in the southern district later that day, the streets remained deserted, with police and army personnel patrolling areas around key government establishments.

The curfew took effect at 8:00pm on Wednesday to bring the situation under control. Yesterday, it was extended indefinitely, with a four-hour break from 11:00am to 2:00pm today, according to the home ministry.

Meanwhile, at least a dozen residents said fear had gripped the town since Wednesday evening, with only a few daring to step outside.

During a visit to Gopalganj, this correspondent saw municipality workers clearing bricks, bamboo, and wood



Army troops on guard during a curfew in Gopalganj town's launch terminal area yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Army used force in self- defence: ISPR

### Police report details Wednesday's events

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army yesterday said it was forced to use force in self-defence during Wednesday's clashes in Gopalganj after coming under attack from "a group of unruly people."

According to a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) yesterday, a group of people carried out "organised acts of violence" in Gopalganj Sadar centring on a public

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## Fundamental reforms non-negotiable

### Yunus tells consensus commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no scope to avoid fundamental reforms of the state's key structures, said Chief Adviser and National Consensus Commission chief Prof Muhammad Yunus.

He made the statement during a meeting of the commission at state guesthouse Jamuna last night, according to sources.

They said that by fundamental reforms, Yunus meant three key issues — establishing a proportional



representation in the upper house, defining the structure of important constitutional and statutory bodies in the constitution, and ensuring women's representation in parliament through direct elections.

He emphasised that these core reforms are non-negotiable and must be addressed.

Yunus expressed satisfaction over the progress made in the ongoing consensus talks initiated by the commission.

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THE JULY  
THAT ROCKED  
BANGLADESH

JULY 18, 2024

## Deadliest day yet in quota protests

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

On one of the deadliest days in Bangladesh's recent history, at least 29 people, including 11 students and a journalist, were killed and over 3,000 injured in violent clashes across the country, as the quota reform protest intensified into a full-scale nationwide uprising on July 18, 2024.

The protests, which picked up from where they had left off the previous night, spread rapidly through Dhaka and other cities. Violence broke out as police and ruling party activists attempted to suppress student-led demonstrators who enforced a complete shutdown of roads, offices, and transport networks.

In Dhaka alone, at least 23 people were killed. Ten of them died in Jatrabari, Shanir Akhira, and Azimpur; nine in Uttara and

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chips scattered across the roads. Only a few shops were open. Mostly women were seen at the markets buying daily essentials, while tea stalls operated with sparse customers. People avoided gathering in groups.

Police and army personnel were deployed across the town, including near the offices of the district commissioner and Roads and Highways Division.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat yesterday, Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said two injured police officials had been moved to Dhaka in critical condition. "I visited the police hospital in Rajarbagh this morning and saw three others receiving

GOVT CAN'T SKIRT THE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR DEATHS: ASK — PAGE 12

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This picture taken from a position on Israel's border with the Gaza Strip shows smoke billowing during an Israeli strike on the besieged Palestinian territory yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## BNP sees plot to thwart plans for Feb election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A conspiracy is unfolding to derail the national election to foil the democratic transition in the country, said the BNP yesterday.

The party alleged that recent violent incidents, including the attack on the National Citizen Party's rally in Gopalganj, are being used as an excuse to disrupt the democratic process.

Party leaders, at multiple events, also claimed that the Gopalganj incident is a coordinated effort to destabilise the political environment.

At an event at the Dhaka University, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the country has been freed from fascism, but the conspiracy has not stopped.

"If you observe, you will see that efforts have already begun [through a planned strategy] to prevent this democratic transition," he said.

"Since the decision was made at the London meeting to hold the election in February, problems started arising. In other words, the aim is to prevent the election from taking place."

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## Voter sign-up now open till a month before polls schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory council yesterday in principle approved the Electoral Rolls (Amendment) Ordinance-2025 that allows the Election Commission to register voters one month before the election schedule is announced, said EC officials.

The ordinance states that individuals who turn 18 before a reasonable time prior to the announcement of national and other polls schedules should be granted the right to vote.

After the meeting, Foyez Ahammad, senior assistant press secretary of chief adviser, told a media briefing at Foreign Service Academy that the "reasonable time" would be at least a month.

Individuals who become eligible voters in a calendar year are enrolled as voters for the next year. Every year, the EC updates the voter list and announces a draft list on January 1 and finalises it on March 2. The commission sets January 1 as the cut-off time to become a voter.

Due to this process, many who became eligible to cast vote after January of a year do not get the chance to exercise their right even if the elections are held in December.

Usually, the EC prepares a supplementary voter list ahead of a national election. Those who became eligible to vote the year before but had not been enrolled are allowed to exercise their franchise through the supplementary voter list.

The EC collected data for the updated voter list through door-to-door visits from on January 20 this year.

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